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Leadership Competency Series

Scaling Heights of Maturity Through PCMM

People Capability Maturity Model (P-CMM) is an organisational maturity framework, where disciplined development of People Competencies drive the organisational performance to achieve desired objectives, writes M R Chandramowly.

It was a mentoring session. The Mentor, a management Guru was explaining and clarifying to the protégé, a young CEO, on how all the different doctrines of management are finally connected to the individual in the form of self-management.

CEO: Sir, I agree with you. All management is ultimately self-management. I understand, that when I manage myself, I can manage others and my organisation. But there are certain processes, management tools such as Six Sigma or P-CMM, which are external. How can you connect that to the "Self"?

Guru: Well, a good question indeed, my dear young friend. What is P-CMM? Can you explain me that in brief?

CEO: Sir, the People Capability Maturity Model (P-CMM) is a maturity framework of an organisation. It describes the key elements of managing and developing its people to a mature, disciplined development of competencies that fuels employee performance.

P-CMM has five maturity levels and each level indicates the capability of the organisation in terms of its people competencies. An organisation identifies the 'Key Process Areas' and draws up goals and inculcates a common organisational practice.

Guru: Good. What an excellent sequential arrangement ! Listen, there is a more superior and perfect arrangement of five levels within each one of us. If you can go up to the top, you become what you call a 'Level 5' Leader.

CEO : Five Levels within me? What are these levels, sir? And how can I reach the top?

Guru: The five levels with us are: The Body, Mind, Intellect, Ego and the Supreme Consciousness. Though all these levels are distinct, they function in totality of all the five levels. But, the result depends on which level is prominent at time. At level one, we are like plants. We live by using our 10 organs of sense and action. At level

two, we perceive through our mind, the faculty of emotions and feelings. We are haunted by our desires and dislikes. At level three, we have intellect, the discriminating faculty.

Using it or not using it, we decide to do things of our joy and choice. At level four, you are an expert. You create your organisation, social status, family and sufficient wealth by expanding your "self" in personal, social and organisational domains.

Here too, you are haunted by your ego, which always whispers in your ears that "you" did everything and "everything" exists because of you. To reach the fifth level you must leave your ego and… (the CEO interrupts)

CEO: Pardon me, sir. At this stage of my life, I have no desire to reach level five. I have dreams to achieve many things at the third and fourth level. Interestingly sir, there is some relation between the five levels you explained and the P-CMM I talked about.

Guru: Yes. Let me know more about your P-CMM. How does it work?

CEO: Sir, I will explain this by illustrating five different organisations and let their names be: Unique Technologies, Twilight Teletech, Tri-star Software, Fourtron Electronics and Pentatel.

In Unique Technologies, work is done in different ways. People work in their own undefined ways. There are no standard practices for people processes: such as Compensation, Training, Performance Management, Staffing, Communication or Work Environment. But, there is a great demand for their products and not many compete on their line of products or pricing. Since their operating profits are endearing, the management doesn't heed to the increasing employee turnover.

Twilight Teletech has an established foundation on which they deploy common operational and people practices. Their managers take responsibility for managing and developing their team members by instilling basic discipline in some repeatable people processes. However, the practices are yet to be standardised, competencies are not developed which are to be aligned with business goals and strategies.

Tri-Star software has identified and developed workforce competencies that are required to achieve their business goals. Knowledge, skill and attributes that are required to deliver business objectives are analysed. There exists a participatory culture among employees. They are told about their career path based on developing competencies that are required in the next level. However, competency practices are yet to get in to teams. People capabilities are not quantitatively managed for organisational growth.

At Fourtron Electronic, they empower, integrate workforce competencies and manage performance quantitatively. With the organisational performance aligned,

the organisation is able to predict its capability for performing work. By managing organisational competency management, it can quantify the capability of its team-based practices, using competency-based processes they build and mentor strong teams to perform on challenging assignments.

Pentatel has established disciplined workforce activities. Technical and behaviour competencies aligned with organisational objectives are quantitatively managed through all teams across their each division. Pentatel continuously improves and aligns personal competency development, workgroup innovation, and organisational capabilities. They treat continuous improvement as an orderly business process to be performed in an orderly way on a regular basis.

Guru: Well, I understood. The state of the each mock organisation symbolises the P-CMM level they are in. Unique is in level 1, Twilight in Level 2, Tri-star in Level 3, Fourtron in Level 4 and Pentatel in Level 5.

CEO: Precisely, Sir. Now I understand the self-management connection to P-CMM. I am grateful to you for this enlightenment.

Guru: Fine. Be well my dear friend. Best of luck!

Emergence of P-CMM

It was during September 1995, Bill Curtis, William E Hefley and Sally Miller presented "People Capability Maturity Model" for Software Engineering Institute of Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania). The entire work was sponsored by the US Department of Defence. A Key Process for P-CMM is defining competencies in the context of an organisation and its people.

Competencies are the driving engine of people processes in organisations. They bridge the gap between "current capability" and "required potential" to scale achievement heights. Besides, becoming a language of performance excellence, competencies combine varied aspects of organisation's knowledge, skill and attributes uncovering both effort and results. The scaling of maturity levels depends on the breadth and depth of competencies practiced.

The levels

Level 1 is an initial state of organisation. In Level 2, a basic management discipline is instilled in repeatable processes such as Staffing, Performance Management, Training, Compensation and work environment. At Level 3, organisational competencies are defined and aligned to the work activities of the people. This takes in activities such as knowledge skill analysis, competency modelling and career development. At Level 4 the organisation moves up from "defined stage" to "managed stage". Key processes at this level include: Team building, Mentoring, Managing organisational competencies and organisational performance alignment.

The focus here will be to quantitatively manage organisational growth, in people capabilities and to establish competency-based teams. Level 5 is the pinnacle of P-CMM focused on optimising and continuously improving methods to develop people and organisational competence. The key process areas here are: Personal competency development, coaching and continuous improvement of people.

Motive is what drives, directs and selects behaviours of individual. Process abilities are the capacity to perform individual skills in the specified method and order in an organisation, to coordinate activities among individuals, groups to adjust overall forces in an orderly flow of work.

Scaling the heights

In a P-CMM company where an established competency-based process exists, individual capabilities are applied within the context of defined business objectives and departmental goals. Competency-based processes are documented. Employees are trained, enforced, measured and improved over a time. Possession of process ability means that an individual is capable to perform the competency-based processes at his level of development in a given competency.

Today, P-CMM is being used throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and India to guide and conduct organisational improvement activities. P-CMM and competency modelling has become an inevitable process for organisations and its people to stay on or win in the competing world of global business.

World is limited to your mind for what you see and hear

A part springs up your joy and the other brings up fear

As you rise, grow and move towards the greatness

The world expands by wearing out your littleness

(Dr D V G's Kagga - 530)

The author is former Corporate Vice President - HR and currently HRD consultant, contact at cmowly@hotmail.com

PS: On the day this article was published, Bill Hefley who is known for PCMM was in Bangalore and it was a pleasant surprise to receive this mail from him.

From: **Bill Hefley** (hefley@cmu.edu)

Sent: 30 November 2005 17:38PM

To: cmowly@hotmail.com

Chandramowly,

Very nice article in today's Deccan Herald (DH Avenues, page
VII-VIII). I especially enjoyed your
tale of five companies --- would that we all were at Fourtron or Pentatel!

I'd be delighted to buy you a Kingfisher or Masala Chai (depending on
your preference!).
I am residing at the Taj Residency (91-80-5660-4444) until 9th.

Best Regards,

bill hefley

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